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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8543
INFO RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
RHMFIUU/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEANHA/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUEAYVF/FAA MIAMI ARTCC MIAMI FL
RUEWMFU/TSA HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 4122
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 9522
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 6442

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 000572

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/TRA: JEFF HORWITZ, JOEL REIFMAN
TSA FOR VICKI REEDER, SUSAN HASMAN

SIPDIS
FAA FOR C. TERE FRANCESCHI, CECILIA CAPESTANY, MAYTE ASHBY
DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR BRIAN HEDBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [OTRA](#) [ECON](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: AMBASSADOR SEEKS IN-COUNTRY FAA PRESENCE TO FURTHER
STRENGTHEN BILATERAL CIVIL COOPERATION

REF: A. BRASILIA 485

[1](#)B. 06 BRASILIA 2315

[1](#)C. 06 BRASILIA 2521

[1](#)D. 06 BRASILIA 2680

[1](#)E. 06 BRASILIA 2578

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy enthusiastically endorses the concept of posting an FAA attache in Brazil to provide for a regional FAA presence in South America. Bilaterally, such a presence would allow FAA and Mission Brazil to work together to assist the Brazilians in dealing with their air traffic control crisis through greater training and information exchange efforts. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) As indicated in reftels, Brazil has been plagued with a host of air travel issues since the collapse of national carrier Varig in early 2006. The stress on Brazil's aviation infrastructure was exacerbated by the mid-air collision between Gol Flight 1907 and a private plane on September 29, 2006, which led to the Gol jet's crash and loss of all 154 persons on board. Air traffic controllers (ATCs) in Brazil subsequently enacted a work-to-rule slowdown to better comply with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulations following allegations of potential errors in their operations just prior to the crash, and also to protest their overall working conditions (as military personnel, Brazilian ATCs are paid the usual military pay rate depending on their rank, not a skilled-personnel salary such as is paid to U.S. ATCs.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Now oft-referred to as a "crisis," the civil aviation situation shows no imminent signs of improvement, having flared up several times since last year, with particularly onerous flight delays and cancellations during heavily traveled weekends and holiday periods. This past weekend, air traffic controllers went on strike, effectively paralyzing air traffic in the country on Friday and Saturday (septel). Over the past few years, air travel in Brazil has increased dramatically, without a corresponding increase in the GOB's budget and other resources devoted to aviation infrastructure.

[1](#)4. (U) Mission Brazil enthusiastically supports the idea of posting a regional FAA attache in-country, either at the Consulate in Sao Paulo or the Embassy in Brasilia, to allow for increased cooperation and technical exchange. We envision the FAA Attache as the primary

liaison with GOB civil aviation authorities, working hand in hand with Mission Brazil's Military Liaison Office and Defense Attache Office as long as air traffic control remains the responsibility of the Brazilian Air Force, in addition to receiving appropriate assistance and support from the CivAir Officer in the Economic Section for any non-military aviation concerns. Brazil is the largest country in the Southern Hemisphere, with several airports offering flights from the U.S. (Comment: With the advent of U.S. carrier flights from Miami to Northeast Brazil, planned in the near future, this will bring the number of airports in Brazil that have flights from Miami to four, possibly increasing to five airports in short order. End Comment.)

¶5. (U) Despite the issues mentioned, Sao Paulo still offers fairly ready access to other Southern Hemisphere cities. Posting an attache there would be more cost- and time-effective for regional coverage than having a person in Miami or farther south in Buenos Aires or Santiago, for example. In addition, aviation contacts in Brazil are not centralized in Brasilia; although the federal government is based here, the air traffic control function still lies with the military. Sao Paulo offers the ability to conduct business both within Brazil and externally, and would maximize the FAA's budget for regional activities. The Ambassador stands ready to assist the establishment of an FAA presence there.

¶6. (U) In addition, Mission Brazil would welcome and support the assignment of a TDY person from FAA prior, or in addition, to the assignment of a longer-term attache, to expedite our aviation cooperation efforts with the GOB.

¶7. (U) Mission Brazil thanks FAA's Western Hemisphere Office (Mayte Ashby, Cecilia Capestany, and Tere Franceschi) for their communication, information and cooperation thus far. We are ready to assist FAA with developing its regional presence. The point of contact for Mission Brazil on military technical exchange subjects

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SOBEL